ASC 287: Writing Center Assistant Training  
Syllabus

Course Information

Course: ASC 287: Writing Center Assistant Training  
Credits: 1  
Semester: Spring 2008  
Sessions: W 8:00-8:50  
Location: Stoxen Library classroom  
Textbook: None; instead, you are required to bring a three-ring binder to store handouts and work from this course  
Pre-/Co-requisite: ASC 281: Dynamics of the Paraprofessional Role in Student Development

Instructor Contact Information

Instructor: Kevin Moberg, Writing Center and Supplemental Instruction Coordinator  
Office: Academic Success Center, office 3 (lower level of Stoxen Library)  
Office Hours: T 10:00-10:50 and 2:00-2:50, W 9:00-9:50, and R 10:00-10:50  
Telephone: 701-483-2999  
E-mail: kevin.moberg@dickinsonstate.edu

Course Description

This course is designed to help you learn to be an effective Writing Center Assistant. You will learn what the writing center model is and how to utilize educational theories and learning strategies that have been the mainstays of writing centers. Emphasis will be on planning the writing tutorial session. This course provides also for continuing development of current Writing Center Assistants. If that is you, you will play a leadership role in the course, sharing your experiences as a tutor and shaping the development of your classmates new to the role. The goal is to develop a team of soundly trained Writing Center Assistants—both veteran and novice—who work well together to help DSU students achieve academic success.

Learning Outcomes

Institutional

1. You will demonstrate critical thinking by synthesizing your tutoring knowledge and skills in a writing tutorial session.  
2. You will demonstrate proficiency in communication skills by applying interpersonal skills in a tutorial session.  
3. You will demonstrate proficiency in communication skills by using technology to access (e.g., Internet, database) and present (e.g., PowerPoint, document) information.  
4. You will demonstrate knowledge of multiculturalism by identifying approaches and issues in tutoring students with diverse backgrounds.  
5. You will demonstrate discipline-specific knowledge and skills related to student development, tutoring, and written composition.  

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6. You will identify resources—ASC, campus, on-line, etc.—to assist students.  
7. You will differentiate learning theories and instructional approaches.  
8. You will apply learning theories and instructional approaches in a tutoring session.  
9. You will use instruments to assess a student’s learning style.  
10. You will demonstrate tutoring techniques appropriate for different learning styles.  
11. You will compare techniques to develop a student’s study skills.  
12. You will apply knowledge of study skills to a tutoring session.
Course Content

You will be provided with a course schedule listing the particular topics that we will cover in what order. However, you can expect in this course to participate in activities designed to teach you—or reinforce your knowledge—about these topics:

- Tutoring role and responsibilities
- Tutoring guidelines and goals
- Structuring a session
- Tutoring do’s and don’ts
- Role modeling
- Goal setting
- Communication skills
- Active listening and paraphrasing
- Resources and referral skills
- Study skills
- Critical thinking skills
- Tutoring ethics and philosophy
- Problem solving
- Probing questions
- Learning styles and inventories
- Adult learners
- Intercultural communication
- Writing process
- Writing techniques
- Grammar, mechanics, and usage
- Content-area writing
- Writing modes
- Record keeping
- Assertiveness
- Group dynamics and interaction
- Learning disabilities

Teaching Strategies

My teaching methods are intended to keep you active in the production of your own learning—to have you doing things in ways that are both academic and practical, allowing you to put to use the theories and techniques you’re studying in this course. You can expect these instructional techniques and learning activities:

- Mini-lecture
- Demonstration
- Discussion
- Reading and writing
- Cooperative learning
- Presentation
- Practice exercises
- Quizzes
- On-line activities
- One-to-one interaction
- Projects
- Guest speakers
- Role playing
- Observation
- Self-assessment
- Video tapes and discs

Research Basis

Association for the Tutoring Profession. http://www.jsu.edu/depart/edprof/atp/
College Reading and Learning Association. http://www.crla.net/
Assessment of Learning

I will assess your learning by examining the work that you produce in and for this course, assigning point values to it, and keeping a running tally of your points earned in comparison to the total points possible, expressed as a percent. That percent will be recorded as a grade using this scale:

- 90-100% = A
- 80-89% = B
- 70-79% = C
- 60-69% = D

Work that demonstrates your mastery of less than 60% of course content will be deemed failing and assigned a grade of F. At semester’s end, your accumulated points must demonstrate your proficiency at retaining and applying at least 60% of course content (regarding tutoring and student development) in order to receive a passing grade for the course overall.

Writing that has been plagiarized and work resulting from cheating will receive no credit in this course.

Attendance and participation are both crucial to your success in this course, and they are not the same thing! Earning the minimum points required to pass this course requires your consistent attendance, and gaining all that you ought to from each class requires your consistent participation (i.e., merely being present in the room is not enough). Your employment (or potential employment) by the ASC is predicated upon your attendance at and participation in continuing training, of which this course and occasional training meetings are important parts. You are expected to be attentive, to participate in activities and discussions, to cooperate with classmates during group work, and to avoid distracting yourself and others with cell phone calls, text messages, music devices, electronic games, etc.

If you do find it necessary to miss one class, your absence may be excused. However, you (not someone else) must notify me before the day of the absence to make arrangements for completing work that you will miss. You must provide a doctor’s excuse for illness, a police report for accidents, or other proper documentation to cover your particular case (e.g., a note from your coach for a DSU athletic contest out of town). Attendance is so crucial to your passing this course that I will be inflexible concerning this requirement to contact me before an absence or with documentation for unexpected absences if you hope to have it considered excused.

Disability Services

The Office of Services to Students with Disabilities, a unit within the Academic Success Center (lower level of Stoxen Library, 483-2999), coordinates accommodations and services for DSU students with disabilities. If you have a disability for which you may request an accommodation in DSU classes and have not contacted the Office of Services to Students with Disabilities, please do so as soon as possible. Please also contact me privately in regard to this course.
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Schedule

Week 1
W, Jan 9  no class

Week 2
W, Jan 16  on-line tutorial on APA format

Week 3
W, Jan 23  quiz on APA format
change sample MLA paper to APA format; discuss main features of APA style

Week 4
W, Jan 30  PowerPoint on independent and dependent clauses; “Punctuation Pattern Sheet” from tutoring folder; examine sample paper for clause errors (run-ons, splices, fragments, and punctuation)

Week 5
W, Feb 6  due: find and adapt or create a (hard copy) clause/run-on/splice/fragment resource for clients’ use
on-line tutorial on comma usage; examine sample paper for comma errors

Week 6
W, Feb 13  due: sample paper with comma errors marked
discuss errors in paper; “Some Basics in Writing . . .” from tutoring folder; examine paper for focus, development and support, organization, thesis, conclusion, coherent paragraphs, and transitions

Week 7
W, Feb 20  due: sample paper with errors marked and advice noted
trade papers and re-evaluate; compare/share/discuss advice you gave on sample papers

Week 8
W, Feb 27  plan second half of the semester: welcoming and training new Writing Center Assistants
W, Mar 5  no class (Spring Break)

Week 9
W, Mar 12  intro to what tutoring is; three-part tutoring cycle; team builder (two truths and a lie); course syllabus and schedule; what to expect from tutoring (question-and-answer session)

Week 10
W, Mar 19  tutoring: role, responsibilities, guidelines, goals, ethics, and philosophy

Week 11
W, Mar 26  due: names of, and contact info for, potential future tutors
early registration for next semester; plan tutoring schedules for Fall 2008

Week 12
W, Apr 2  tutoring cycle Part I (Steps 1-4); goal setting

Week 13
W, Apr 9  due: journal
tutoring cycle Part II (Steps 5-8); using probing questions

Week 14
W, Apr 16  tutoring cycle Part III (Steps 9-12); cultural awareness and intercultural communication

Week 15
W, Apr 23  due: tutorial observation
learning styles and inventories; learning disabilities; study skills; resources and referral skills

Week 16
W, Apr 30  tutoring do’s and don’ts; veterans advise novices about new role as Writing Center Assistant; evaluate your work over the semester